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FLIGHT'S O' FANCY

VERSES BY
LAURA SIMMONS



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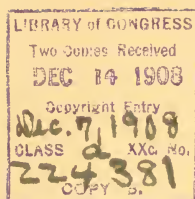
VERSES

Flights o' Fancy

By

LAURA SIMMONS

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1908



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To the Memory of The Mother

TO WHOM MORE THAN TO ANY
OTHER, BELONG THESE LITTLE VERSES

By Her Child

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A MEMORY

OH Mother-hands of balm and gracious healing,
And cool, soft fingers that could heal and bless!
So sure to charm the aching and the fever
With magic power and soothing tenderness

Oh Mother-feet that grew so very tired
Treading Life's pavements and its burning sands!
Have they found rest at last, and cooling waters,
Where they may stop to loose their earthly bands?

Oh Mother-eyes, so quick to probe the sorrow!
So keen to see the hurt and understand!
Do they not shine tonight from highest heaven—
Bright with the old-time courage, high and grand?

Oh Mother-heart, so wise and strong and tender
That has not died, nor failed, but lived and wrought
In deeds and words, in daily work and action,
In lovely memory and blessed thought!

Oh Mother-love, that lives past Death and parting—
That reaches still to bless and guard and guide—
To hold me from the snare undreamed and waiting—
To point the refuge where I yet may hide!

And oh—the things my heart hath yearned to utter!
The joys that thrilled, the pain that seared and scarred!
But I must wait until the sunset's splendor
Shall hold for me its shining gates unbarred.

Past joy, past sorrow, past the driving rain
Of tears I see her stand and watch for me.
And clear the sweet old Mother-question cometh:
"Oh, child, my child, and is it well with thee?"

SYMPATHY

IF I could tell you, dear—could find some way
To speak, that you might know how deep and true
My love has been—if only I could say
Something that might perhaps be sweet to you!

If I had known such pain as hurts you so,
Why, I would come, with heart a-throb today
With bitter pain and grief—like yours, you know—
And kneel beside you, dear; yet I would say

No word. Ah, no! my dear, but you would know
Somehow, I think, that all your tears and pain
Another soul had learned long, long ago—
And yet lived on, and walked the earth again!

The silence chills me. How the very sea
Lies still beneath the mist's gray velvet shroud!
And all the sweet old earth that used to be
Grows dim and wet with tears of dew and cloud.

And I am silent, dear. Yet oh! to say
One word of comfort! I, so close at hand,
So near to you, and yet so far away,
Can only pray that you may understand!

CAP AND BELLS.

PEOPLE marked his gay content—
Jests and laughter, as he went
On his way.

Peddling humble little wares
Through the crowded thoroughfares
Day by day.

How his cheery voice and air
Wrought as balm and blessing there
In disguise!

“He that knows not grief nor care
Well may such contentment wear”—
Quoth the wise.

When his merry laugh arose
Making jest of human woes,
Blithe and gay;
Mortal man should sometimes grieve—
“’T is not human so to live,”
Whispered they.

“Some dark secret there may be—
We perchance should spy and see—
’T is our right.”
And they stole where he had gone,
To his narrow home, alone—
In the night.

But the eyes that peered within
Met no dark device of sin—
Found no guile,
Save a naked soul, revealed
In its lonely pain (concealed
All the while),
That with bitter tears outwept
All the sorrow that had slept
’Neath its smile!

THE WAITING OF ELOISE

OH leaden ages, with such stillnesses !
Here, in these holy shadows, evermore
I wait, and watch, and yearn the long day o'er —
Telling my rosary on wearied knees,
Till he shall come. Behold me, as of yore,
With love unchanged, eternal — Eloise !

Oh saints, so calm and passionless, and cold —
How shall I greet him ? List ! thou shalt be taught
What love was that we loved. One Self, One Thought.
Shall not our sorrows, deep and manifold,
Our patiences and partings, be forgot,
Drowned in that flood of ecstasy untold ?

What were our vigils then — the hot heart-pain
And hunger keen ? All unremembered they
As snow on water, in the sudden sway
Of rapture, blind and breathless, and the rain
Of tears, when in the old beloved way
My head lies pillowed on his breast again.

BORDERLAND

WILT thou not hear me ? Oh, I call and call
And thy still form stirs not ! What is it there
That thou hast found so mighty as my love ?
What power to hold thee ? Mark what thou did'st say :
"Past life—past Death, I love thee !" Was that thou,
Oh stern white face ?

When was thy heart so cold,
And when thine arms unwilling — and the fire
Quenched in these lips ?

Dost hope to daunt me now,
Oh first and last beloved ? I would stay by

Though these dead shades grew quick about me here
With powers of Hell and darkness !

Yet, withal —
The tears steal past my numbed eyelids (see,
They dwell a moment on thy garments here
To hold my kisses to thy frozen shroud).
Oh, break thy silence ! Dear — hast thou forgot ?
It is my shadow lies along the wall
Within this crypt; and I am with thee still,
The last — the last ! Alone with Memory,
Whilst all the righteous world hath shrunk away
And left thy soul to everlasting flame.

Oh, hear me say I failed thee not !

The world ?
It would not begrudge me this, I think, tonight —
(When recked we ever of its yea or nay ?)
That, from its joys I creep afar — away —
Through cruel cold and blackness, to thy feet !

The night glides past me; oh, my one-beloved,
Hear now the voice that stilled thy fierce despairs,
That soothed the mighty tumults of thy soul
With softest breath ! How wilt thou learn to lose
The love that ever sheltered thee of old
And bore thy harms ?

Thou canst not go alone
On that dark pathway ! So, I will be swift;
Somewhere, — perchance somewhere thy groping hand
Will seek for me — and if it find me not —
I cannot think of that; I can but haste.
Life is so long, so long ! and this good steel
So soon can solve the questioning and pain.

A few hours' start — but yet I follow fast
To greet thee — and the night is almost done !——

THE PRAYER OF THE CONTENT

LORD, I have heard them tell of wondrous deeds—
Of miracles of mercy thou hast wrought;
Of sins forgiven, and bitter anguish healed—
And, canst thou lend for once thy gracious thought
Unto a heart of joy and glad content,
That to thy throne its humble plea hath brought?

I have no sorrows, Father, no regrets;
My life is lived of peace, without, within.
No wild heart-pain; no passion haunts my breast,
Nor secret ghost of old remorse and sin.
My sails are furled within thy haven calm,
Far from the surges' roar and ceaseless din.

And yet, Oh, cast me not from out thy care
Because my bark lies safe and sheltered so!
I see the wrecks drift by on every tide—
Life's derelicts—tossed idly to and fro;
Oh, guard these tranquil sails, lest they too stray
On those wild seas, whose shoals I cannot know!

That I might hold these blessings, Lord of all!
Might lead mine own dear flock along thy way,
Through humble years of sinlessness and peace—
This only is the boon for which I pray;
This only, from a heart of glad content
And tranquil joy, I crave of thee this day!

BEREFT

I WATCH the multitudes that 'round me kneel—
Lifting their prayers to God in rapt appeal.

I harken to the myriad voices, blent
In accents passion-thrilled and eloquent;
And in my breast the sorrows wake and call
In surging supplication. Yet withal—

I sit in silence, dumb and wistful there.
Words cannot frame my deepest, dearest prayer!

A NOCTURNE

Where art thou, dear, within this misty light
That pours its magic silver o'er the night?
Do'st know the fragrance of these lonely hours—
(As June is sweet with breath of perfect flowers)
With thought of thee what time thou wert anear,
And prayer for thee afar, my dear, my dear.

To think that far across the deep and night
Thou, too, do'st watch within this silver light!
Do'st scan these self-same stars—this very sea
That whispers o'er the dim-lit sands to me.
And yet—such waste of dark doth keep me here—
I may not reach thee—hold thee, dear—my dear!

Perchance beyond the gloom—the silver sea,
My heart's deep cry may rise and reach to thee;
Perchance 't will thrill the darkness, soft and clear
Till thou shalt hear me—Oh my dear, my dear!
Though 't were a sob—aye, but a very sigh:
“Behold, 't is I that loves thee—it is I.”

THE NATIVITY

SILENT the hills of Judea, and over the plain, in the
starlight,
Hovereth peace, the consoler, to breathe down a soft benediction.
Three were the shepherds abiding, and guarding their flocks
in the night-time,
Drowsy, now sunk into slumher, now rousing again to their
vigil—
Then, on the hush of the midnight, descended the wonderful
glory;
Then were the heavens revealed, and night was as noonday
about them;
Then fell the voice of the angel, with comforting words to
the watchers,
“Fear not! I bring to you tidings of joy, which shall be
to all people.”
Then told he them of the Christ-child, the king they must
seek in a manger,
Words of such wonderful promise, that, hearing, they marveled
within them.
And with the voice of the angel, came also a chorus celestial,
“Glory to God in the highest, and peace and good will to
the nations.”
And as they sang, they departed; and lo! in the night that
succeeded
Glistened afar in the distance, a star of such marvelous
beauty
That its companions surrounding grew dim, and were paler
beside it.
Gone was the fear of the shepherds, because of the joy that
was in them;
And they arose for their journey, for such had the angel
directed.

For now there had come the fulfilling of that which was
told by the prophets:
“A Saviour shall come to the nations, the Christ being
born of a virgin.”
Leaving their flocks in the starlight, alone, on the hills of
Judea,
On they to Bethlehem journeyed, and found there Mary
the Blessed
And with her Jesus the Christ-child—fulfilling the word of
the angel,
“Him ye shall find in a manger” (most humble of humble
surroundings.)
Near to them rested the cattle, with meek eyes widened
in wonder,
Wistful, as half understanding, with soft gaze fixed on the
strangers.
Like to the silvery gleaming of snow as it lies in the sun-
light,
Even so now was the glory that circled the forehead of
Mary.
Lighting her eyes, as they fell on the face of the Christ-
child; and saw not
The shadowy slant of the cross there, the shadow of death
and of anguish.
Knew not the man of much sorrow, the one that “with
grief was acquainted.”
And as the shepherds beheld them, with joy that was
mingled with wonder,
Kneeling, they glorified God, for the promise of peace he
had given,
Sang of their wonderful joy, of the gift that their Father
had sent them,
Knelt they, and worshipped the child, in the name of the
Father Almighty.
And in the glow of the dawn, with the star going ever
before them,

Came from the eastward the wise men, with jewels and
gifts heavy laden,
Gifts that were fragrant and precious, to lay at the feet of
the Christ-child,
Worshipping Mother and Son in the name of the Father
Almighty!
Still thro' the ages there ringeth the voice from the hills
in the starlight,
"Peace!" and the echoes arising, have thrilled all the
earth with their promise,
"As it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be forever,
World without end!" and we whisper "Amen" to the
words of our Saviour.
Yea, and the hearts of the nations shall echo "Amen"
thro' the ages!

THE PRECEDENT

WHEN thou hast learned that cherished friends can
fail—

When faith seems vain, and love without avail—
Oh, hearken to that cry of agony
That from past ages cometh down to thee
From One betrayed—bereft of rank and power—
"Could'st thou not watch with me one single hour?"

AUTUMN LOVE SONG

BEHOLD, dear love, how dies the weary year!
How all the glad young earth grows sad and old—
And brown leaves whirl across the dreary wold
Where once was June—our June, remember, dear!

(An alien world, my sweet, since June passed by!
Yet—'t is not I hath changed—it is not I!)

The winds go sobbing 'mongst the empty trees:
“For June again!” Do you remember, sweet,
The scented air—the rose leaves 'neath our feet?
The birds flee shuddering from the icy breeze.

Ah, sad the change, dear heart, since June passed by—
Yet Love still waits thee—calls thee! Love and I.

A FIRELIGHT COMEDY

COME sit here awhile, where the firelight
Is glowing with tremor and start.
'T was only for this that I lingered
Till after the guests should depart.
Ah, me! how the breath of your roses
Is laden with love and with truth!
They bring up again, for a moment,
The tenderest dreams of one's youth.
Methinks 'twould be sweet to live over,
Or love over, even in play,
As children might do, knowing nothing—
But just "making bleeve," as they say.
Of course 'twould be only a jesting,
A pastime to you and to me—
But just for tonight let us try it
And see if such things there could be.
And Time shall roll back (let's pretend it),
For only ourselves, we will say,
So instead of the years we have wasted,
We'll think it was only a day!
And we will be friends again—lovers,
Perhaps, as of old, if you will;
And play that we never had quarrelled,
But really did care, you know, still.
'Tis just for tonight, we'll remember,
And midnight shall limit our play—
And then—why then Time can move onward,
And I shall be going away!

Now—how to begin! You must ask me
To read some old legend, and sweet,
And you should sit here in the shadows
With me kneeling low at your feet.
While up in its fantastic gleaming

The firelight flickers and faints—
And over your eyes, as you listen,
The white lids droop, like a saint's.
And how the soft rose-flush is mounting,
And drifting, in just the old way!
(But you must not blush at my words, dear—
Remember, we're only in play,)
And now (of all wonders)! your hand, sweet!
So tender its touch on my hair,
As snow, falling soft in the winter,
Caresses the dark leaves there.
But hearken—the midnight is striking!
Our playtime is over you see.
(Yet never an hour of the old love
Was precious as this one to me!)

And now you are free! Do you hear me?
Quite free, as you had been before,
And we are grown-up folks again, child,
And not "making bleeve" any more.
So I will just pray as I leave you,
That God will let nothing befall—
For oh, very-dearest! *I love you!*
'Twas never the child's play at all!
And I had meant never to tell you,
Because of the past that was dead—
But somehow (perhaps 'twas the roses)
And some way the words would be said.
So try and forgive me. Good-night, now—
And yet, and yet—God! Do I dream?
Are there tears in your sweet eyes welling,
Or is it the fire's subtle gleam?
Look up! for a sob is my answer—
I hold you forever and fast—
And I know that the play of the children
Meant only a real love at last.

REST

THIS is the birth—this pain and strife,
This trembling heart awakening free;
This debt to Heaven of human life,
When soul puts on mortality.

And this is Life—this stay on earth.
Where we must store that strength we gain
To bear our griefs, with only mirth
Enough to make it not all pain.

And this is Death—this seeming sleep,
This heart at peace within its breast;
These eyes that never raise nor weep,
This tender, pitying, dreamless rest.

Yet Death is Birth and Life at length;
Each to our blindness looketh best.
Birth has its promise, Life its strength;
'Tis well—but only Death hath rest!

FLOTSAM.

LORD, dost thou note yon tiny struggling bark,
Far out upon the waste of sea and night,
Alone—alone, bereft of guide and light,
How it doth toss and drift within the dark,
'Gainst cruel odds? and, Father, dost thou hark,
Hear'st not the prayer for morn—for blessed sight—
For one faint ray from out thy Heaven so bright!
Thou canst not, Lord, deny one pitying spark
For need so sore; then, if some storm-spent soul
Doth drift tonight unlighted and alone,
Far out on sorrow's deeps to toss and roll,
Thou sure wilt heed its prayer, its helpless moan!
Then mercy, Lord, on yon poor sail I cry,
Lest it were child of thine, ah, lest 'twere I!

NOCTURNE

HOW still tonight the world lies stretched in sleep.
Such sleep as soothes the wastes of sea and land!

How soft the waters trail across the sand!
And far beyond where Earth's gaunt shadows sweep—
See how the moon doth bend above the deep
To kiss the sullen waters of the strand,
Until the dark lips glow at her command—
And warm—and gleam, and nearer, nearer creep!

Somewhere across the dark art thou—and I
Am here; how can it be, when all beside
Is steeped with peace, with longing satisfied—
That human passion with its human cry
Can mock the wedded calm of earth and sky,
A-dream within the moonbeam's silver tide?
That souls can wander lone 'neath heaven wide—
As alien chords 'neath perfect symphony?

O night of peace, that foldeth false and true—
O stars that burn and swoon within the blue,
And waves—that heighten as they spring to shore
(As love grows great by loving yet the more)—
Draw near and nearer—so to share with me
This hour of mine, from out eternity!

WAYFARERS

WHERE are you wandering, baby,
Over the world today?
Supposing we journey together—
But I guess you must lead the way,
For my old feet ill can follow
Where your toddling ones may stray.
But where are you wandering, baby,
With your shout and your gleeful song?
I fear I must fall behind you
If the way is to be very long.
But heaven itself, they tell me,
Is found by such as you;
Think you, if I held your hand close,
They would let me enter, too?

I suppose there is some one who loves you
With a love never-resting, alert;
Some one to kiss you and scold you
And cry if you fall and are hurt;
To whom you are always "my baby,"
The same as in babyhood's day,
Some one to tuck you up snugly
And some one to help you to pray.
To help you to pray—oh, baby,—
As only the mothers can do!
If you missed all that, I wonder
If much is forgiven you.

Would you give me your glittering halo
For its measure of silvery gray?
Or a year of my long-dead springtime—
A month—ah, only a day.
But I fear it is late now, baby,—

So many a year too late—
Or I, with a child's free footsteps,
Had walked to the heavenly gate.
Have you learned what tears are, baby?
Not those that you shed in your play,
But the tears—long-pent and fruitless—
Of hearts that have missed their way.

And now—just a bit more slowly,
My dear; I am tired, you see,
And can't keep up—you had better,
I guess, go along without me.
And so good-by to you, baby,
It was rather a jaunt today
For my poor old bones; but, baby,
Do please come again this way!

THE SPECTER

SOMETIMES, when my long-prisoned joy bursts free
When my full heart sends forth its gladdest strain
And sudden rapture, keen as touch of pain,
Floods all my soul with purest ecstasy
Toward that high God that taught me love—and thee,
While past my blind delight naught else is plain
Save that I love thee, and am loved again—
Sometimes—oh dear beloved! befalleth me
A doubt— a sudden terror, as though day
Were stricken at high noon to twilight gray;
As June changed swift to winter, bleak and bare—
As half a dream, and all a wild despair—
Throughout my soul it thrills, with sudden dread:
“Ah, what if I had lost — had lost, instead.”

MOTHERHOOD

MY neighbor's baby boy across the way
Lies dead, and I must go to her and say
Something of comfort—ah, what shall it be?
“Grieve not, poor heart, that he is gone from thee!
Thy bitter tears—thy cruel, lonely pain—
Perchance are for some larger, nobler gain——”

I cannot! No, for safe upon my breast
My own dear bairnie smiles in rosy rest.
Ah—what if I were she, bereft—denied—
And he—dear God! *the little boy that died!*

LADDIE

DEAR little laddie of bronze-brown hair,
What shall I do with the toys and things
That you left behind when you went away
Down where the daisy sways and swings?
You remember the brand-new rod and line,
And the big tin fort, with its soldiers brown—
And the top that was mended and went again?
They're there—all there, where you threw them down.

Laddie—Oh laddie of bronze-brown hair!
The winds are keen where the daisies blow!
And what shall I do with the broken heart,
And the tears that never have ceased to flow?
For I long for you and the daisy land,
And I say, “’Tis the charm of a magic song,
And a sight more fair than the dreams of man,
That has kept my laddie so long—so long!”

FAY FOLK

SOME nights I try to keep awake
To see how fairies really look.
(You have to watch so sharp and still,
So says my mamma's Fairy book.)

I squint my eyes a tiny space
And then I see them — one by one —
Come trooping in from Fairyland
With funny little hop and run.

They nod and whisper to themselves —
Then scamper off across the floor
As if they'd never, never seen
A little boy like me before !

Yet if you ask me how they look —
Somehow I cannot seem to tell;
For pretty soon they've slipped away —
And then I hear the breakfast bell.

THE BOY THAT LIVES NEXT DOOR

OFT I've envied goodly people that could boast a model
boy—
The kind that will not fight or shout, or break each costly
toy—
Who never tracks his muddy boots about the house, nor
flings
His playthings on the parlor floor—my boy did all these
things!

And whenever I would chide him, and his reckless ways
deplore
I would always bid him pattern by the boy that lived next
door.

Yet the playthings would get broken in the careless little
hand,
And my head come nigh to bursting when he brought his
pirate band
To tear the house to atoms—while I talked and talked in
vain
To keep the small hot fingers from my shining window-
pane;
But whene'er his brand-new trousers or his ruffled shirt
he tore
He would say he “didn’t want to hear of that good boy
next door.”

Now at last I’ve perfect quiet—there is stillness every day;
And my window-panes so grimy have grown clear and
bright for aye;
And I strain mine eyes to find the slightest mud-print on
the floor—
But alas—my house is spotless as the boy’s that lives next
door:
How I listen—till my longing ears do ache—to catch a
sound;
And if only I could find a shoe, or broken toy around!
But, ah, no!—I only hearken, hearken vainly evermore,
And I only hear the laughter of the boy that lives next
door. ♪

WORK.

SO stern she seemed, so grave and sober-wise—
This friend of serious mien and patient eyes—
I teased her oftentimes by jest and smile
That she should be so earnest all the while;
She did but serve to pass the time away
When I became aweary of my play.

Yet now that Life grows hard, and sad, and drear—
Behold my friend of friends, most stanch and dear!
My sanctuary sweet, upon that day
When sorrow presseth hard upon my way.
With her alone I find my blest release
From care, in sweet forgetfulness and peace.

THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW

IT was dusk when they cut him down, the hated and
harried of men,
But they left in him breath for his life, just so he might
die again;
And cursed him, child and man, and jeered as they passed
him by
To the long gaunt line of the hills, stretched black 'gainst
the fallow skv.
(‘Sure t’is little to pay,”
Hear the old crones say,
“For the sins that are black on his soul this day.”)

And the fair moon stepped from the clouds, and marveled
at the sight
Of the God-reft, outcast soul, that was passing away in
the night,

And a silence fell on the dark, till the stars came out to see
A form that stole out of the city, and drew to the ghastly
tree.

One stately and stern of mien, with the air of the nobly-
born,

Who hushed a babe at the breast, as she spoke in her
wrath and scorn,

“O falsest of faithless men ! that hath perjured thine hon-
ored name,

While innocent wife and babe must share in thine own
black shame !

’Tis but God’s just wrath that falls on thy guilty head
this day !”

And she clasped more close her child, and was lost in the
shadows gray.

(For we’ll reap as we sow,

As we all of us know,

And ’tis joy or ’tis woe

We must choose as we go !)

Then far to the moonlit west was a trampling of horses
heard,

And they drew at last to the hill (and still hath the man
not stirred).

With mad, wild dash they neared, where he lay that was
all but dead;

Till his glazing eyes met those of her who rode at the head.

Full soft and supple of limb, the creature was wondrous
fair;

Wide-eyed, with sweet, loose lips, and a mane of red-gold
hair;

But her light laugh froze at the sight, with a shudder
of terror and hate,

As she fled with her reveling crew, and left him alone
with his fate.

(So his soul, it was stole for a smile and a kiss,
And he'd bartered his honor, his all, for this !)

Now the midnight passed the sky, and the stars that
watched so still

Saw a last lone form draw nigh in the shadow of the hill.
She was gray, and withered, and bent, and with feet grown
lame and sore,

With her poor hands labor-stained, and the winds in the
rags she wore.

But she crept to his side, and knelt, with a sob of joy and
of love,

And she kissed his feet and his clothes, and his matted
locks above;

"I thank thee, God!" she cried, "for my dear, lost boy
tonight !

The child that Thou gavest me — Thou only cans't judge
him aright !

O, Thou, that cans't pardon our weakness, that do'st
hearken this night unto me,

Have mercy on this poor boy, that hast strayed from me
and from Thee !"

And the wretch stared up to her face, and his black lips
moved and spoke,

While out of his glazing eyes the hot tears leaped and
broke.

"There be hell and woe," he muttered low,
"But if God hath love for this world of woe,
It is love like this — I know, I know !"
And his eyes grew clear and bright.

"I thank thee, mother of mine !" he cried,
And he laid his head on her breast and died.
But the poor thing heard, and was satisfied,
As she watched through the long, black night.

THE TWIN SPIRITS

ONE out of Spirit-land passed by my way,
A joyous vision, as, with careless song,
And smile like sunshine on a summer's day,
He bade me join him as he strode along;
What could I but obey ?

But soon across his face dark shadows came;
The mellow voice grew harsh, with threatening tone;
The hand so warm now seemed a very flame,
With sting and sharpness where it touched mine own !
Men called him "Life" by name.

Another passed me by from Spirit-land; —
Not as the one,— ah, no! His visage gray
Was stern-set and unsmiling,— darkly grand.
The very sunlight failed and shrank away.
He, too, held forth his hand.

But, as I followed on with faltering breath,
The hand I clasped grew strong, and safe, and kind,
His tender voice as one that comforteth,
Sank sweetly on my wearied heart and mind.
Men told me this was Death.

THE CONQUEROR

I AM done with the game; let me idle.
I have learned all its terrors and toils;
I have wrested from Fate what it pleased me —
 (But spare me the sight of the spoils !)
I have feasted in state at Life's banquet,
 I have drunk to the lees of its gall;
Its smiles have I won, and its curses —
 But never I murmured at all !
I have thrilled with its warmth, its caresses —
 I starved at its royal behest —
Yet,—man amongst men — I have mastered !
 Now let me forget — let me rest'

Too weary for prayers or for laughter,
 Unmoved by Earth's smiles, or its tears,
I crave but for peace everlasting
 And for You ! through the ebb of the years
Till the hour when the Last Foe shall front me —
 (Be near, Oh Beloved ! 'till 'tis past !
My *face in your breast* as I meet him —
 My *heart on your heart* at the last !)

THE COBWEB CHAMBER.

SILENTLY, in barren splendor,
Stands a mansion o'er the way;
And no sound disturbs its stillness
Through the weary livelong day,
Till My Lady comes at even,
At the setting of the sun,
And, with keys in hand, she passes
Through these chambers, one by one,—

To a tiny nook, half hidden
Back upon the topmost floor,
Where My Lady bends to listen
Just outside the fast-closed door.
And she softly, softly enters
On a noiseless, light tiptoe,
As in fear that one might waken
Who had slept there years ago.

There where shafts of dying sunlight
Pierce the chill and silent room,
She can see the rats go scurrying
Through the shadows and the gloom;
And the dust of years lies round her
Like a carpet thick and deep,
Whilst above hang wondrous cobwebs
Where the spiders weave and sleep.

There's a trundle-bed all rumbled,
With its folds so soft and rare
Stained with age and dust-discolored;
There are toys strewn everywhere;
There's a train of cars, rust-covered,
And a drum and broken kite;
And a horse all reined and harnessed,
Standing ready day and night.

All in dust enwrapped and buried !
 Whilst on high, above them all,
Laugh a boy's dark eyes of splendor
 From a frame upon the wall;
And My Lady bows before it
 In the dust so soft and deep,
By the dim old horse, who only
 E'er has seen My Lady weep.

And she kneels amongst the playthings
 In her trailing robes so grand
By a faded chest, whose hinges
 Scarce obey her trembling hand,
And unfolds — poor, sad old Lady !
 As some treasures dear and rare —
Just a tiny suit, moth-eaten,
 And a curl of shining hair !

THE LESSON OF THE CHRIST

I.

He knocked at the heavenly portal;
He was weighted with years and with fame,
Secure in earth's riches and station,
In the power and the pride of his name,
But the angel made answer "Who art thou?
Thy treasures the world holdeth dear
Are not rare enough for the Christ-child;
Our King hath not need of them here!"

II.

And the gateway stood barred before him,
Till he turned from its radiant light,
Most humbly, to earth's lowly highways,
And wandered alone in the night.
And he came to the streets of a city
To the hauntings of famine and sin,
Where the curses and blows intermingled
With sobbing of children within.

III.

And he entered and labored amongst them,
Those desolate waifs by the way;
And he fed them, and clothed them, and lighted
Their sin-darkened souls to the day.
Until years had passed by in their coursing,
When again to the gateway of heaven
All footsore and weary he journeyed,
On the day that the Christ-child hath given.

IV.

Yet he faltered, as one half believing,
Half doubting, with hope failing fast;
Ah, what if they heed not his summons;
And if he shall fail at the last?
Then a murmur arose in the heavens,
And into the stillness and night
Came crowding the souls he had cherished,
To hail him with songs of delight!

V.

And small eager hands beckoned onward
To life and the glory inside;
And behold! As they raised him amongst them
The beautiful portal stood wide!

THEODORA

WHAT shall I ask for Baby dear;
Of all the gifts He deemeth good ?
Tender and deep my prayer must be,
Sacred to white-souled babyhood.

I know not if thy life be blest
And filled with tenderest beauty all;
Or if across thy sunlit way
The shadow of the cross may fall.

And so I could not wish thee, sweet,
All greatest gifts, with naught of less,
Since they must know Life's deepest pain
Who know Life's deepest happiness,

And sorrow is our earthly test,
Which only Faith can understand;
Shall we not drain — each one his cup —
Bitter or sweet, since from His hand ?

I know that thou, if to thy door
Should come Death's angel, white and dim,
With happy trust and fearless faith
Would stretch thy baby hands to him.

This is my prayer — as years roll by
And leave their brand on heart and brow —
That close of life, of joy, of woe,
May find thy trust and faith, as now.

“Except as one of these.” Oh, child !
So mayst thou be, although the test
Leave whitened head, still to the last
A *child* — to fall asleep and rest.

“LIKE ONE OF THESE”

WITH baby's hand in mine I slowly roam,
And watch the sunlight as it fades and dies;
Till o'er my dreams his childish pleadings come:
“Please take me up ! my feet so tired !” he cries.
“Please take me home.”

Some day,—who knows how distant now ? — some day
When on life's highway, faint, with eyes too dim
For tears, to mark the ending of the way,
If far on earth His child shall cry to Him,
What shall He say ?

No gift he craves that life has left unknown,
No earthly boon — ah, no ! but low and sweet
The childish prayer shall tremble at the throne:
“Oh Father, take me ! for my toiling feet
Are weary grown !”

AFTERWARD

YET—if it might have come, dear heart, to me!
If this deep love of mine—so strong, so vain—
Had found its own, its mighty Self again—
Oh, dear—most dear! If such a thing could be,

What might we not have made of this, God's earth—
We twain as one, if thou hadst loved me so?
And if thy hand clasped mine—for weal, for woe—
What wonders had we wrought, of richest worth?

Oh, first last love of mine! I make my vow
To love thee to the end; and for the rest—
Perchance it were too sweet—(God knoweth best)
And so we lost—yea, dear, both I and thou!

LETHE

All of sweet the soul can render,
All of life that Thought holds tender,
Though the cord be strong or slender,
Grant this day for dreaming o'er!

Future joy were vain for dreaming,
And a Truth too sad for seeming
Through the still-warm Past is gleaming;
'Tis the Present I implore!

Give me but to dream — unsleeping !
For tomorrow in its keeping
Holds again the web of weeping
Where our feet must stumble o'er !

So for one short day forget me,
Where no hope may rise to fret me —
Just to dream on idly — let me
Weave my foolish fancies o'er !
* * * *

Through a mist of slumb'rous feeling,
Somewhat like to song is stealing,
And as balm of gracious healing
Lies against my heart so sore.

And its melody enthralling
O'er the purple hill-crest falling,
Seems to linger, faintly calling,
Calling far across the shore.

How I harken to its saying,
All my fevered soul allaying!
As the raptured monk at praying,
Kneeling on his stony floor.

Praying endless peace be given,
And their souls forever shriven,
Whom the sin of earth hath riven;
Souls long lost and passed before.

Now the echoes, farther flying,
Unto lightest breath are sighing,
As a soul grown faint to dying —
It is nightfall on the shore.

And the rosy heaven is clouded —
Dim and gray the hills are shrouded;
And the shadowed deep is crowded
With the ghostly days of yore.

How my dream seems idle—wasted!
Doomed its joy to be untasted;
Yet the long, long day it hasted
Finds me nobler than before.

RESURGAM

LORD, I beheld thy fair earth cold and gray,
Made desolate by Winter's icy reign;
I heard the gaunt trees sobbing as they sway—
"Oh to bring back the sweet, glad life of May!"
Lo, thou that makest new such things as they,
Let me begin with springtime once again!

Perchance I, too, might rise again, might grow
From all that hath been sad and dark and drear,
Above and far beyond the self I know
To fresh, new aim, new effort! crying "Lo,
It is I, dear Lord, that died a year ago
With autumn leaves, thy springtime hath been here!"

MEA CULPA

ONE thorn doth press within my crown of fame —
One shadow o'er my perfect noon-day fall;
And secret sense of fault beyond recall
Doth lurk to haunt my soul with righteous blame,
Extorting all its meed of bitter shame
That I may drain to dregs my grail of gall;
Yet passions of remorse were fruitless all,
For, when mine hour of sorest struggle came
Then was I false to my immortal soul —
Unto that deep conviction, sweet and strong,
Wherewith my God had trusted me ! And fate
Doth taunt me, through these leaden years that roll,
With loathing of my craven sin and wrong,
And thought that Earth holds naught can compensate !

JUNE

THERE are so many roses left to die
In this gay garden ! See, beneath my feet
The fair things in their scented stillness lie
Forgot — they are so many and so sweet !
Yet I would find again one withered leaf
Of that lost rose that bloomed a June ago —
(Oh, day of rapture, blest beyond belief.
I could not know, beloved ; I could not know !)
Might not one petal only, brown and sere,
Bring back the old wild ecstasy again ?
Ah, Heaven ! Would I not give the whole bright year
Of blooms like these — so passionless and vain ?
A world of fragrance ! Yet, my heart doth pray
For one dead flower, that in the long ago
Breathed out its life into one perfect day —
(I could not know, beloved ; I could not know !)

COMPENSATION

Lord, grant me grace to trust thee patiently
And humbly,—not alone when thou dost give,
But when thou tak'st away; the answered prayer
That brought me blessed hope and joy untold
Perchance did mean another heart's despair;
And for my dear-loved dream that was fulfilled—
Maybe some unknown soul went desolate.

Who knows but that, the while I weep today
Because I failed, and missed thy Heavenly grace,
On some far-distant hearth beneath the sky
Another kneeleth low, in rapturous praise.
Some soul that, worn with tears and long despair,
Now floods with joy, and cries to Heaven high:—
“At last, oh God! behold my heart's desire!”

THE OLD AND THE NEW

I'VE been out to my garden, since I've got back ter town,
And I've made up my mind I don't begrudge Maria
Brown.

You've heerd, perhaps, about Maria—what handsom things
she has!

(She's cousin on my mother's side—Maria Cobb, that was.)

Well, I went on to visit her—first time in twenty year.

(My, but there's lots of passin' in New York City there!)

Maria looked as nacheral—I just felt quite ter home,

And asked about her garden, on the first day that I come.

It seems she keeps it in the house—it's called Conservatoor—
And seemed a likely place for sun, with big glass walls and
door.

Her roses and her violets was fine as one could buy,
And there was things called orchids that they said come
dretful high.

But when at last I come to take the hull thing in and out—
I couldn't see as there was much to really brag about
To folks what knows what flowers is, as I was used
before,

'Twas downright disappointin'—all the hull conser-vatoor!

There warn't a pink, nor marigold, nor sweet-alyssum
spray!

I'd looked for oleander or nasturtium, anyway!

Nor even chiny aster, or petunia, or sich!

And she could wal afford 'em—they call Maria rich!

She hadn't phlox or hollyhock a-growing by the door—

You know most folks has hollyhocks, if they don't have
nothin' more!

I thought I'd send her some of ourn, since we've got such
a sight—

You'd orter see 'em when they bloom—all pink, and red
and white,
With hummin' birds awhirl, and bees a-creepin' in and out—
We'll likely have some in the fall, that she could have to
sprout.

You'd think she'd have syringa, that's pure and white and
sweet—

I thought of ourn, that's growed up high, a-peekin' down
the street—

And oh—them lilacs up to home! a'thinkin' of 'em there,
I just got faint from smelling of that cooped-up hothouse
air:

Them great, cool, purple bunches, a-drippin' wet with dew,
As strong and pure as salt-sea air that sweeps one thro'
and thro.'

Maybe I'm queer—and most folks is, so far's I calcalate—
But yet if I were like to die, and nigh to Heaven's gate—
I'd sooner choose them lilacs that's a-tossing by the road,
To git just one last breath on 'ew—than all the orchids
growed:

And so, in spite of all that grand conservatoor she has—
I don't begrudge Maria Brown—Maria Cobb that was!

THE TRINITY OF LOVE

LO, I am faith ! But bid me come to thee,
Oh Son of Man, unto thy heart and soul,
And I will lead thee, and will lift thee up
Above the world,—beyond the sounds of earth;
Her sobbings and her struggles, and the clang
Of labor's hammer with its din and toil,
Up,—up to heights where eyes too clearer grow
For mists of doubt,—where hearts too strong become
For blows of pain to give them unbelief.
For Faith shall help thee dull the pain of life,
Softener for thee the bitterness of death,
And to the grave deny its victory.

And I, whom men call Hope, would lend to thee
Some of my cheer which makes the gray world bright.
No soul so lost but, led by me, may find
Something in all the world for which to live.
Most oft I seek those hearts that sink and fail,
And faint beside the way, to lift them up
And cheer and comfort, giving smile for tear,
Enkindling life anew within the heart,
A fresher vigor in the tired feet,
And purpose in their life;—all this I do,
For Hope sees not the shadow of the cross,
Only God's sunshine against which it lies.

I am the greatest of the Three, who stand
With arms outstretched in tender Charity.
My mercy give I thee, and bid thee come
And welcome share my poverty or wealth.
Learn that 'tis blessed to give, and thou wilt know
Someone is ever poorer still than thou.

Those I uplift whom all the world condemns;
Souls bred in sin,—forgive them Lord, who judge!
Children of crime,—yet they are his as well!
But for His grace, so might we too have been.
Forgive the sin, in pity for the soul;
Pardon Life's mystery for the sake of Heaven.

And I? Ah, know'st thou not that sacred power,
That bond divine which links the earth to heaven?
Stronger than Life or Death, than hate or sin,
Love conquers all, by peaceful warfare won.
For I am Faithful,—even unto Death.
Beyond the grave I stretch my yearning arms,
Believing and enduring till the end.
Hoping the best,—for Love cannot despair.
Forgiving, tender, pardoning again
Thy grievous fault when once again thou fall,
In sweetest Charity. How do I this?
For I am not of earth, but sent from Him,
His strongest attribute He gives to thee.
As earthly fathers of their natures give
Their earthly children, so do ye inherit.
But Love *most* perfect gave he once alone
Unto an only and most perfect Son,
Who loved so true that of such love He died.
Take thou thy cross with humble heart, and know
That Love alone gives thee thy pledge of Heaven !

THE SAVANT

WHAT if I dared to dream above my page—
Awhile forget these tomes of countless age,
And give myself to fancies sweet and strange—
Far from the treasured lore of saint and sage?

What if I turned my tired, sleep-ridden eyes —
Wearied of vigils under midnight skies —

Unto that land so mystic and so fair —
That realm of dreams that men call Paradise?

And if I did but give these steady feet
From their calm heights of sure and safe retreat,
To stray within that maze enchanted — where
Faint music seems to call in whispers sweet?

And if I ventured just the threshold o'er —
Leaving my load of fame and priceless lore
For one brief hour of ecstasy — ah, then,
How to turn back and grope to earth once more?

And if 't were true — that tale the dreamers bear
Of Love, the child, who reigns as sovereign there?

(But I have solved all secrets of the spheres —
And him alone, I found not, anywhere!)

Yet deep within this cell strange visions rise
Of childish form, and sweet, love-hungered eyes,

I cannot drive the pleading ghost away —
That mutely questions — and nor sleeps, nor dies!

If I might clasp the baby fingers, so,
In my cold hand! Ah, would my starved heart glow

And beat and leap, in healing ecstasy
In this still breast, that knows not joy or woe?

But I have dreamed and dreamed; my thoughts have fled
Far from these musty tomes of ages dead;

Ah — did I wander down from my sure place,
Or mount — I know not! unto Heaven instead?

APOLOGIA

THIS is my work, dear Lord; behold how ill
Mine hands have wrought the task thou set for me!
How I have failed ! How very far I failed
In thy great plan !

Oh, I am spent with shame
And anguish unavailing; for at last —
Before Thy mighty presence, I perceive
How crude the strokes appear — how impotent,
Clumsy, and all misspent in curve and line.
Be gracious, Judge of All Things !

If, perchance,
Sometimes I had no light — was it so strange
I failed ? And if the world were all o'erswept
With cloud and gloom, with mists of tears and doubt
That set thy heaven too distant for my cry —
And if the tools were ever blunt and dulled
Wherewith I wrought — oh, let these speak for me !
As thou rememberest, be merciful!

Here all is roughened, blurred; as heart and hand
Were shaken with revolt and fierce despair.
(Thou who forgettest not, be merciful!)

And here the steadier touch — the surer line
That tells of happier times; of hopes and aims —
(How mighty then and full of consequence,
And now so slight to stand in thy dread gaze !)
And petty triumphs, and the loves and dreams,
And all the wondrous ecstasies that lead
To raptures blind and breathless !

Yet, withal —

What matters now ? Down in my shrunken soul
I make one plea — one cry; but to go back
Unto the shapeless block — to mould again
The thing I marred and wasted ! Give me this —
Erase the lines to inchoate mass once more
And let me have it, now, unto mine hands !
And let me build anew thy glorious thought !

How faultless now would be my fashioning,
Where all was rude, impetuous and unskilled !
How deft these hands that only groped before !
And confident ! How clear mine eyes to see
The whole, in all its wondrous symmetry !

It may not be — my little hour is passed;
The night comes down, and nought remains to me
Save this — to bear me witness where it stands
In all its poverty. Hear then the cry,
Contrite and sore — how it beseeches thee !

Behold my work. Yet bravely have I striven —
And yet it is my Life — my All in All.
Oh, Lord Omnipotent, be merciful !

THE SUNNY SIDE

THE LOST BALL

STANDING one day on the golf links
I was weary and ill at ease,
And I baffed and foozled idly
Over the whins and tees.
I know not what I was dreaming,
Or where I was gazing then —
But I smote that ball, of a sudden,
With the force of twoscore men.

It sped through the crimson twilight
Like a shot from a ten-inch gun;
And it passed from my fevered vision
To the realm of the vanished sun;
It chassed over the bunker,
It carromed o'er hazard and hill;
It went like a Thing infernal —
I suppose it is going still.

It shied each perplexing stymie
With infinite nerve and ease,
And bored right on through the landscape
As if it were loath to cease.
I have sought, but I seek it vainly,
That ball of the strenuous pace,
That passed from the sole of my niblick
And entered into space.

It may be some blooming caddie
Can (sooner or late) explain;
It may be that only in heaven
I shall find that ball again.

WITH APOLOGIES

IN the Subway, Oh my darling,
When the lights are dim and low,
And the evening hordes of people
Wildly come and wildly go —
In the Subway, Oh my darling,
Think not bitterly of me,
Though I slid into an end-seat,
Left you lonely, set you free.
For my hat was crushed and battered —
My cravat a sight to see;
It was best to leave you thus, dear,
Best for you, and best for me.

L'ENVOI OF HOUSE CLEANING

WHEN Earth's last picture is dusted,
And the floors are painted and dried —
When the oldest carpet is beaten,
And the youngest spider has died —

We shall rest — and faith ! we shall need it !
Lie down for a moment or two,
Till the dust on the grand piano
Shall set us to work anew.

We shall have real paint to lean on;
Pile everything into the hall,
And scrub for hours at a sitting —
And never be tired at all !

And they that are clean shall be happy.
They shall eat off a kitchen chair,
And splash with a seven-league dust-mop
At the back of the chiffonier'

And the Man of the House shall praise us,
And shall (more than probably) blame.
And we never shall work for money
(And certainly not for fame).

But each for the joy of the cleaning,
And each in her feminine glee,
To look just as well as the neighbors
For the sake of Things They Might See !

GENIUS

A VOICE within me cried, "This is thine hour !
A mood is on thee ! Write and prove thy power !"
My theme should be sublime — the earth around
Should marvel at a grandeur so profound.
My thoughts flew fast; my pen seemed all too slow,
And all before I knew, 'twas done, and lo!
A joyous thing, quite innocent and free,
That danced with most unseemly revelry;
In merry ripples did its measures roll,
Its flippant laugh was anguish to my soul.

Once more I felt the scorching flame ,divine —
The great afflatus — thrill this soul of mine.
But now my wayward muse made all the earth
O'erflow with joy and song, and impish mirth.
And all was light and laughter, once again —
I seized my inspiration, and my pen.
Once more I wrought, and once again, behold:
A solemn measure of majestic mould,
Withal so lofty, sphinx-like, and so grand,
I meekly sought, with awe, to understand.

BRAKE, BRAKE, BRAKE.

BRAKE, brake, brake —
You're a wretched fraud, I see;
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me !

Oh, well for our crack chauffeur,
As he swears and hammers away —
Oh, well for the pleased small boy,
As he chortles at us in his play.

But our weary feet trudge on
Some five miles over the hill;
And oh, for the thud of a vanished tire
And the sound of a gong that is still !

Break, break, break —
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea !
But the pride I took in that blamed machine
Will never come back to me.

STUNG !

THE gay mosquito bites, and having bit
Moves on; nor all your vigilance nor wit
Can lure her back to catch her in the act —
Nor all your choicest words avail one whit.

And this I know; whether she doth alight,
Or simply buzz around you in the night,
One chance at her upon your shoulder-blade
Better than on the ceiling lost outright !

A jar of ointment underneath the cot —
Some lint, and hamamelis, when we thought
We heard her singing in the wilderness —
Oh, when we're all prepared, she cometh not !

Oh threats of Hell and sundry other woes !
This much is sure — unscathed she always goes;
Think not she's settled on your ear — for she
Ah, whence and whither flown again — who knows ?

LIMERICK

THERE once was an artist named Hugh
Whose paintings were awfully trugh;
He made Aphrodite
Without any nite,
And raised quite a hullabalugh!

PSYCHE'S PLAIN'T

AS once I wandered through Elysian's vale,
I chanced on Psyche, weeping dolefully;
"Why grievest thou, O sweetest child?" quoth I,
And tearfully she told her mournful tale.

"Each day," she sobbed, "as Cupid passed my door
A kiss to me he threw, with tender smile,
And meaning glances,—although I, the while,
Would take no heed, but all his arts ignore."

"But yestereve,—ah me! In harmless play,
And roguish thought, I kissed my hand to him;
He smiled,—and yet" (her pretty eyes grew dim),
"Today he frowns at me, and looks away."

RUBAIYAT OF "OLD PROB."

THE Weather Prophet writes, and having writ
Benignly back amongst His Clouds doth sit;
Nor all the Cold Sarcasm of the Press
Can hinder Him from thinking He is It.

And that Inverted Bowl we call the Sky
He rules from Day to Day with varied Lie;
Lift not Your hands to Him for Help — for He
As little really knows as You or I!

Myself when Young did eagerly peruse
The "Weather Indications" in the news
For Picnics and for Balls; but evermore
What they did promise I did surely lose.

I sometimes think that never glows so Red
The Dawn as when the Weather Clerk has said:

“Tomorrow — Cloudy; Heavy Winds, and Showers”
And Sol comes out, Right dazzlingly, instead.

Ah. Love ! couldst't Thou and I somehow conspire
To grasp this Weather Bureau scheme entire;

Would we not quickly get onto the job,
And then remould it to our Heart's Desire ?

For He no Question makes of Ayes and Noes,
But anything that strikes his Fancy, goes;

What Others think is neither Here nor There —
He knows about it all — He knows — He knows !

THE SECRET.

THIS was how it came around :—

Long ago,
When the snow
First came whirling to the ground,
In a hurry
And a flurry,
Dancing, prancing from on high
Bits of blue
Fell down, too,
From the lovely azure sky.

Down beneath the snow fell they,
You and I,
If we try,
We can find them some spring day,
Where they lie,
Scraps of sky,
When the white snow melts away.
Tender, true,
Brave and blue,
“Dear, sweet violets!” we'll say.

THE MIRACLE OF MARIE

My dolly took the whooping-cough,
And tho' I tried and tried
To save her fair and precious life,
She closed her eyes and died.

I planned to have the funeral
Beneath the cypress tree.
(That being such a favorite haunt
Of my adored Marie!)

So Belle (my Paris doll) and I
Sat down and mourned together,
We wore our very nicest frocks—
So pleasant was the weather.

But soon—alas! old Rover chanced
To spy beneath our tree;
And bounding right into our midst,
Bore off our poor Marie!

Well—Belle, she fainted quite away,
So dreadful was the shock.
(She cracked her lovely nose, beside,
Upon the cruel rock.)

Then back and forth old Rover hied—
He dearly loves to tease—
And straightway tossed that luckless doll
Right up amongst the trees!

And there she sat, erect and calm,
And stared around. (Her eyes
Pop open when she sits erect,
And close, when down she lies!)

So then we changed the funeral
Into a lunch for three—
With Rover as our honored guest,
Beneath the cypress tree!

A FAIR ROMANCE

RIGHT haughtily she swept about — the Lady Ermyn-
trude,
And twined her jewels in her hair, and vowed, in lofty
mood,
She'd never wed the ancient Earl, for all his titles clear;
Quoth she: "What think you, Hildegarde?" And I re-
plied: "My dear —
I weary of these castle walls — let us adjourn outside!",
Pray order our gold coach-and-four, that we may take a
ride!"

"An old romance!" I hear you say. Perhaps you'd never
guess,
The "castle" was our attic room, the dames myself and
Bess;
With bits of glass and shaving-curls for jewels bright and
rare,
And Grandma's dresses from the trunk all that we had to
wear!
And for the real, true Hildegardes and Ermyntrudes I
grieve —
Because they never had such fun — I firmly do believe!

A LITTLE ARTIST

I MADE a picture yesterday —
And you just ought to see
The luck I had with those new paints
My grandpa bought for me!

I made the house all pink and green —
The grass a kind of blue;
With lovely purple trees around —
The sky was purple, too.

The cow was orange, trimmed with red,
With crimson horns and tail;
And, last of all, I made the sea
With a fierce black pirate sail!

My father thinks it's rather queer —
But Ma — she only says
I'll be an artist great and proud
Some one of these fine days!

A PHOTOGRAPH.

I DRESSED my dear dolly in red, white and blue —
 (Sarah Maude is my last Christmas present),
To sit for her picture — just like me or you —
But I told the man not to put me in it too,
 For I just couldn't smile and look pleasant.

But alas ! that my dear Sarah Maude should do so !
 She was shockingly cross and unruly,
And would flop over this way and that — to and fro —
While her legs up and down and criss-crossways would go —
 (I was terribly mortified, truly !)

Well the picture he sent us was such a surprise —
 My adored Sarah Maude wasn't there;
But only just me, sitting up straight and wise,
And my mamma, whenever she sees it, she cries:
 "What an artist he is, I declare !"

THE ETERNAL FEMININE

TWO-TWENTY, three, and four-fifteen —
 Five-thirty, and six-twenty-two,
Or seven — it's any one of these;
 The deuce! what can a fellow do?

She'll surely be on one of them,
 And yet — one can't hang round all day
To meet a train! She writes, "of course
 You'll be there," and goes on to say —

'You must be sure to be on time!'
(On time!) "hoping to see you soon,
I'll close my note — the train arrives
There *sometime* in *the afternoon*!

Two-twenty, three, and four-fifteen —
You wonder what these figures show?
They're just the train she's coming on!
That's all — so glad I am to know!

A VISITOR.

O H, Grasshopper of dusty hue —
How came you here, I pray?
Right on my parlor sofa, too!
Why this will never, never do —
You've surely lost your way.

I cannot ask you to remain,
I fear lest, if you stopped,
You'd yearn to roam the fields again —
To feel the sun, and wind and rain —
And hop as once you hopped.

Out where the glad, free breezes blow —
Ah, there's the home for you!
So here's the screen — hop up! (I know
'Tis rude to treat a caller so!)
Dear Grasshopper — adieu!

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